DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 156 015 HE 010 131

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TITLE Non-Returning Students: A Year-Long Perspective.
INSTITUTION Grand Valley State Colleges, Allendale, Mich. Office of Institutional Analysis.
PUB DATE Mar 77
NOTE 9p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attendance Patterns; *Cluster Colleges; *College Students; *Dropout Research; Ethnic Groups; Grade Point Average; Higher Education; Institutional Research; Marital Status; Research Projects; Sex Differences; *State Colleges; *Student Characteristics; Transfer Students; Veterans
IDENTIFIERS *Grand Valley State Colleges MI

ABSTRACT

The question of whether students who enrolled in Grand Valley State Colleges in Fall 1975 who exhibit "regular attendance" (enrolled in fall 1975, and also enrolled 3-5 terms later) differ significantly from those who do not exhibit "regular attendance" (enrolled in fall 1975, and not enrolled 3-5 terms late) is examined. No differences between regular and non-regular attenders were found regarding males versus females or by ethnic background. Regular attenders were more likely to be single, upperclassmen, with higher grade-point averages, a higher proportion of declared majors, and were less likely to be veterans, transfer students, or from Kent, Ottowa, and Muskegon counties. (SPG)

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Non-Returning Students:

A Year-Long Perspective

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Office of Institutional Research

R. Bruce Tweddale
March, 1977

Report #71

APR 1 1977

HE010131

Highlights of Findings

We started with all students enrolled Fall, 1975, as our pool. We have been studying various aspects of this pool, such as patterns of attendance over four terms (see Attendance Patterns: Fall, 1975, to Fall, 1976, Report #67). This report explores the question of whether the students who exhibit "regular attendance" (enrolled Fall, 1975, and also enrolled 3-5 terms later) differ significantly from those who do not exhibit "regular attendance" (enrolled Fall, 1975, and not enrolled 3-5 terms later) on variables available in the Student Information System. Students who graduated have been removed from the pool so that we are considering only those expected to enroll. Differences between regular and non-regular attenders are summarized below:

1. No differences on males versus females.
2. Regular attenders were more likely to be single.
3. No differences on ethnic background.
4. Regular attenders are less likely to be veterans.
5. Regular attenders had a higher proportion of declared majors.
6. Regular attenders were more likely to be upperclassmen.
7. Regular attenders are less likely to be transfer students.
8. Regular attenders are less likely to be from Kent, Ottawa, and Muskegon counties.
9. Regular attenders are more likely to have higher GPA's.

Background

A report was issued in February, 1976, by the Office of Institutional Research entitled Non-Returning Students From Fall, 1975. This report examined several characteristics of students enrolled Fall, 1975, breaking the group into those who subsequently enrolled Winter, 1976, and those who did not. It was found that the group which enrolled Winter, 1976, had a higher percentage of males and single students than did the groups which did not enroll Winter, 1976. On the other hand, the enrolled group had a lower percentage of 3-county area students, transfer students, underclassmen, and students with low GPA's. Ethnic background was not significantly different between the two groups.

Another report, Attendance Patterns: Fall, 1975, to Fall, 1976 (November, 1976), indicated that 20% of those students enrolled Fall, 1976, who did not enroll Winter, 1976, subsequently re-enrolled either Spring, Summer, or Fall term, 1976. Thus, they were not really "drop-outs" in the true sense of the word. Rather, they were "stop-outs" that returned for a later term.

The question then arises whether the same characteristics which differentiated between the enrolled and not enrolled groups in the Non-Returning Students From Fall, 1975, report would still be significant if the 20% not enrolled Winter, 1976, who subsequently re-enrolled were not considered as "drop-outs."

Methodology

The base group used consisted of all students enrolled during Fall, 1975. A group which will be called the "continuing" group was created. This group consists of all of the Fall, 1975, enrollees who were enrolled either Spring, Summer, or Fall of 1976. The "non-continuing" group then consists of those enrolled Fall, 1975, who were not enrolled either Spring, Summer, or Fall of 1976.

Statistical analysis was done using the Chi Square test of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Difference between groups was considered significant at the 95% confidence level. In each case, the tables will display the percentage of those enrolled Fall, 1975, which were in the "continuing" group.

Differences By Sex

College	% Male in Continuing Group	% Female in Continuing Group	Significant?
CAS	82.3%	82.6%	No
TJC	71.9%	75.7%	No
WJC	79.8%	81.2%	No

College	% Male in Continuing Group	% Female in Continuing Group	Significant?
CIV	65.5%	72.4%	No
SGC	71.8%	69.2%	No
GAP	69.2%	61.8%	No
Access	49.1%	43.7%	No
CGS	76.9%	92.0%	No
Total	74.1%	74.8%	No

Although on a one term basis, males continued from Fall, 1975, to Winter, 1976, in higher proportion than females, this difference disappears over the longer haul. The above table shows that sex is not a significant factor in retention using the definition of this report.

Differences By Marital Status

College	% Single in Continuing Group	% Married in Continuing Group	Significant?
CAS	83.8%	77.1%	Yes
TJC	74.4%	69.7%	No
WJC	81.0%	78.4%	No
CIV	68.3%	67.4%	No
SGC	70.0%	72.0%	No
GAP	66.4%	70.8%	No
Access	48.8%	44.8%	No
CGS	94.7%	86.4%	No
Total	77.6%	65.8%	Yes

In this case, the one term phenomenon of single students being more likely to persevere is also present over the longer term. In total, a significantly higher proportion of the single students enrolled Fall, 1975, were enrolled either Spring, Summer, or Fall of 1976 than was true for married students. In term of the individual colleges, only CAS had a difference large enough to be significant.

Differences By Ethnic Background

College	% Minorities in Continuing Group	% Non-Minorities in Continuing Group	Significant?
CAS	76.0%	82.8%	Yes
TJC	88.9%	73.5%	No
WJC	84.9%	80.0%	No

College	% Minorities in Continuing Group	% Non-Minorities in Continuing Group	Significant?
CIV	85.7%	66.3%	No
SGC	80.0%	71.3%	No
GAP	70.7%	60.9%	No
Access	47.7%	46.8%	No
CGS	100.0%	86.8%	No
Total	71.9%	74.6%	No

In total, ethnic background again did not exhibit a significant difference between groups. However, in CAS a significantly higher proportion of non-minority students who were enrolled Fall, 1975, were also enrolled either Spring, Summer, or Fall, 1976, than was the case for minority students.

Differences By Veteran Status

College	% Veterans in Continuing Group	% Non-Veterans in Continuing Group	Significant?
CAS	79.5%	82.8%	No
TJC	65.0%	74.5%	No
WJC	74.7%	81.4%	No
CIV	63.2%	71.4%	No
SGC	68.6%	73.1%	No
GAP	60.0%	67.8%	No
Access	53.4%	45.2%	Yes
CGS	0.0%	90.3%	No
Total	69.6%	75.2%	Yes

In total, a significantly higher proportion of non-veterans were in the "continuing" group compared to veterans. The only admitting group where a significant difference exists is in Access. Here, the opposite is true; veterans persist in a higher proportion than non-veterans.

Differences By Declared Majors versus Undeclared Majors

College	% Declared Majors in Continuing Group	% Undeclared Majors in Continuing Group	Significant?
CAS	82.6%	81.8%	No
TJC	74.4%	68.5%	No
WJC	81.1%	79.5%	No
CIV	69.6%	67.2%	No
SGC	72.8%	63.2%	No

College	% Declared Majors in Continuing Group	% Undeclared Majors in Continuing Group	Significant?
GAP	68.6%	66.7%	No
Access	64.8%	44.4%	Yes
CGS	90.0%	87.0%	No
Total	80.4%	64.8%	Yes

In total, 80.4% of the students enrolled Fall, 1975, who have declared majors were in the "continuing" group compared to 64.8% for those who have not declared a major. This difference is significant at the 95% confidence level. The only admitting unit where this difference is significant is in Access.

Difference By Class

College	% Frosh in Continuing Group	% Soph in Continuing Group	% Jr in Continuing Group	% Sr in Continuing Group	% Masters in Continuing Group	Significant?
CAS	59.8%	85.4%	86.6%	86.6%	NA	Yes
TJC	51.4%	75.9%	82.1%	75.7%	NA	Yes
WJC	55.0%	84.7%	88.1%	83.3%	NA	Yes
CIV	60.0%	86.7%	83.3%	60.0%	NA	No
SGC	- Not Applicable -					
GAP	51.9%	96.2%	85.7%	100.0%	NA	Yes
Access	36.5%	82.8%	80.4%	61.0%	NA	Yes
CGS	- Not Applicable -					
Total	47.3%	84.3%	86.1%	83.7%	NA	Yes

Differences By Admission Status

College	% FTIAC[1] in Continuing Group	% Transfers in Continuing Group	Significant?
CAS	85.3%	78.5%	Yes
TJC	73.2%	74.4%	No
WJC	82.0%	78.7%	No
CIV	72.1%	63.4%	No
SGC	- - - - - - - - - - - Not Applicable - - - - - - - - - - -		
GAP	65.5%	77.8%	No
Access	49.2%	45.6%	No
CGS	- - - - - - - - - - - Not Applicable - - - - - - - - - - -		
Total	78.7%	69.9%	Yes

(1) First time in any college

As with the one-term study, this study shows that the "continuing" group had a significantly greater percentage of students who came to GVSC without prior collegiate experience as compared to transfer students. The only admitting group which exhibits this same trend to a significant degree is CAS.

Differences By Geographic Area

College	% 3-County* in Continuing Group	% Non-3-County in Continuing Group	Significant?
CAS	81.4%	84.6%	Yes
TJC	73.0%	74.4%	No
WJC	80.2%	80.9%	No
CIV	60.3%	87.5%	Yes
SGC	72.9%	54.6%	No
GAP	65.6%	71.9%	No
Access	45.2%	54.4%	Yes
CGS	86.8%	100.0%	No
Total	72.1%	79.3%	Yes

*Residents of either Kent, Muskegon, or Ottawa counties

This data re-inforces the previous data for one term attrition. Here also we find that a significantly larger proportion of students from the non-3-county area are included in the "continuing" group as compared to students from the 3-county area. The same phenomenon is also exhibited in CAS, CIV, and Access.

Differences By Cumulative GPA

Students enrolled Fall, 1975, were divided into four groups based upon cumulative GPA calculated through Fall, 1976. The four groups are as follows:

Group 1 - 0.00 through 0.99
Group 2 - 1.00 through 1.99
Group 3 - 2.00 through 2.99
Group 4 - 3.00 through 4.00

The percentage of each of these groups which are in the "continuing" group is shown below.

College	% Group 1	% Group 2	% Group 3	% Group 4	Significant?
CAS	36.4%	75.7%	84.8%	87.6%	Yes
TJC	85.7%	79.2%	75.3%	78.8%	No
WJC	70.0%	78.7%	86.6%	85.9%	No

College	% Group 1	% Group 2	% Group 3	% Group 4	Significant?
CIV	39.1%	66.7%	66.7%	82.8%	Yes
SGC	25.0%	0.0%	60.0%	77.9%	Yes
GAP	40.0%	74.0%	91.2%	60.0%	Yes
Access	31.9%	59.8%	59.4%	51.7%	Yes
CGS	50.0%	--	100.0%	91.1%	No
Total	39.2%	73.9%	81.4%	78.8%	Yes

Those with higher cumulative grade point averages are more likely to be in the "continuing" group. This is true in total, and for each admitting unit except TJC, WJC, and CGS.

Since students who do not have a GPA (have not attempted courses with grades of A, B, C, D, E, F) have not been included here, results for TJC, WJC, and CIV represent students who have cross-registered into graded courses.